

REGIONAL TRAILS NEEDS REPORT

Introduction

The Growth Management Act requires each jurisdiction's comprehensive plan to contain a transportation element which includes the identification of current and future transportation needs. King County's Regional Trail System is an integral part of the county's non-motorized transportation system forming a system not unlike the road system with major arterials (regional trails) connected by secondary arterials and neighborhood streets (community trails). These trails provide connections between cities, employment centers and recreational destinations and facilities. The system is provided with additional connections for non-motorized circulation by the Roadshare Program of King County's Transportation Department.

The King County Regional Trail system is one of the largest county trail systems in the country. The current system includes more than 175 miles of improved multi-purpose trails with plans for more than 100 additional miles of regional trails to accommodate walkers, cyclists, equestrians and others. The system reaches from the northern to the southern borders of the county and provides connections from urban areas in the western portion of the county to the state trail system in the eastern portion of the county that reaches to the eastern border of the state.

The regional trail system has evolved over many decades through numerous planning efforts that built upon the steady expansion of the system. These include the early Urban Trail Plan of 1971, King County Regional Trail Plan of 1992 and the 2004 Regional Trail Inventory and Implementation Guidelines. Regional trail elements are also found in the 1985 Open Space Plan, 1996 King County Park and Open Space Plan and the 2004 King County Open Space Plan: Parks, Trails, Natural Areas and Working Resource Lands. Trail plans may also be found in the historical community plans and master plans for individual trails.

What is the REGIONAL TRAILS NEEDS REPORT?

The Regional trails Needs Report is a comprehensive list of recommended improvements or additions to complete and upgrade the network of regional trails serving transportation purposes the county as identified in a number of adopted county plans. This is a planning level document and in most cases further detailed study will be required to determine if projects are feasible from environmental, financial or other cost-benefit perspectives and to determine specific design requirements for each project.

Purposes of the REGIONAL TRAILS NEEDS REPORT?

The Regional Trails Needs Report assists King County in making decisions on planning and funding regional trail improvements. It establishes an important link between the plans and the annual programming of the capital funds in the county's capital improvement budget for regional trail acquisition and development. The capital improvement program sets the program for phasing projects and programming funds.

How to use this document

The regional trail projects included on this list are organized by individual trail, such as the Cedar River or Soos Creek Trails. This is followed by information on the location and scope of each trail project. The projects are identified by a letter and number that corresponds to the map showing the general area of the project. In some cases, where acquisitions or technical analysis have not been completed, projects are located on the map in general locations.

Financing the Regional Trail System

The regional trail system is funded with a combination of county Real Estate Excise Tax funds, grants and partnerships with other jurisdictions. Funding forecasts are based on projections for the Real Estate Excise Tax revenues and grant funding, both of which are subject to economic and market conditions. The regional trail system is a major regional service of the county. The 2006 appropriation for trail funding is roughly \$8 million and is anticipated to be within a similar range over the life of the 6 year capital improvement budget.